



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
PHILIP A. AMICONE

October 20, 2010

Yonkers City Council
City Hall, 4th Floor
40 South Broadway
Yonkers, NY 10701

Hon. Councilmembers:

More than two years ago, I proposed the City of Yonkers Public Nuisance Ordinance for your consideration in order to address the growing and festering problem of those absentee property owners and slumlords who, with impunity, allow patterns of criminal activity on their properties that threaten the public safety and quality of life of the people of our City. After careful review and public input, a majority of your honorable body has agreed that this ordinance is necessary and have sent it to me for my approval. Today, I hereby sign the City of Yonkers Public Nuisance Ordinance into law with this brief message.

Yonkers is blessed with historic neighborhoods that add richly to our City's heritage. However, many older buildings in these neighborhoods have invited a malignant subset of property owners to take root in our City who operate their buildings from a distance with complete disregard for the surrounding community and its residents. These absentee landlords and business owners seek profit in Yonkers, but refuse to invest in our City's future. Worse, many of them allow criminal activity to proliferate on or within their properties in flagrant violation of our penal laws relating to illicit drugs, prostitution, gang activity, stolen property, and the illegal use or possession of weapons.

Over the past two decades, our Police Department has made Yonkers one of the safest big cities in America by steadily lowering crime rates and improving the overall safety and welfare of our neighborhoods and residents. Yet, while the men and women of the Yonkers Police Department continue to make a remarkable impact on crime, many of their efforts in our older neighborhoods are thwarted by the persistent neglect of a group of absentee property owners and slumlords. Often our police remove criminal threats only to have them return because property owners refuse to permanently address the conditions that encourage criminal activity. Therefore our Police Department has asked for broader, more effective tools to fight crime in these neighborhoods, and it is our duty to give them the tools they need.

Every neighborhood --- every resident --- in our City, regardless of location or how old, deserves the same public safety protection and quality of life guarantee. The Yonkers Public Nuisance Ordinance will help us make good on that guarantee by attracting responsible landlords and property owners who care about becoming part of a community. It will help promote commerce in our City by encouraging business owners who invest in a better Yonkers. It will improve the public health, safety and welfare by giving our police the resources they need to do their jobs. And, most importantly, it will help rid Yonkers' neighborhoods of those absentee property owners and slumlords who foster a corrosive criminal element that threatens the law abiding public.

Finally, although I am signing this ordinance into law, I am not doing so in disregard of those property and business owners who have expressed reservations about some of this law's applications. However, in my judgment, the need for this law outweighs the concerns of its detractors. Yet no law is perfect, and I fully acknowledge that the City Council and I may revisit this legislation at a future point and, if need be, make adjustments to it.

In summary, by enacting the City of Yonkers Public Nuisance Ordinance, the City Council and I are fulfilling our most basic responsibility to the people of Yonkers by better providing for their safety, welfare and quality of life. I hereby sign this legislation into law.

Sincerely,



Philip A. Amicone
Mayor

cc: Mark Blanchard, Corporation Council
Edmund Hartnett, Police Commissioner
Joan Deierlein, City Clerk